

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. **(previously presented)** A method for forming a multicellular ceramic article, the method comprising:
 - a. forming a mixture of components comprising inorganic ceramic powder materials, a binder, an aqueous solvent for the binder, and an oil-based component having a flash point;
 - b. mixing and plasticizing the components to form a plasticized mixture;
 - c. shaping the plasticized mixture into a green ceramic article;
 - d. drying the green ceramic article;
 - e. removing a portion of the oil-based component from the green ceramic article by flowing a heated gas longitudinally through the green ceramic article; and,
 - f. firing the green ceramic article having a portion of the oil-based component removed.
2. **(previously presented)** The method of claim 1 wherein the ceramic article is a cellular monolith.
3. **(original)** The method of claim 2 wherein the cellular monolith is a honeycomb.
4. **(currently amended)** The method of claim 3 wherein the heated gas is flowed at a rate of 0.2 to 8 standard cubic feet per minute (scfm) per 90 cubic inches of the green ceramic article.
5. **(currently amended)** The method of claim 4 wherein the heated gas is flowed at a rate of 4 to 8 scfm per 90 cubic inches of the green ceramic article.
6. **(original)** The method of claim 5 wherein the heated gas is at a temperature which heats the green ceramic article below the flash point of the oil-based component.

7. **(original)** The method of claim 6 wherein the gas is at a temperature which can heat the green ceramic article to between 110°C to 165°C.
8. **(original)** The method of claim 7 wherein the heated gas is air.
9. **(original)** The method of claim 8 wherein the air is maintained at a temperature of between 120°-140°C.
10. **(original)** The method of claim 7 wherein the heated gas is nitrogen (N₂).
11. **(previously presented)** The method of claim 10 wherein the N₂ is maintained at a temperature of between 155°-160°C.
12. **(original)** The method of claim 10 wherein the N₂ gas is recirculated.
13. **(original)** The method of claim 1 wherein at least 70% of the oil-based component is removed.
14. **(original)** The method of claim 13 wherein at least 85% of the oil-based component is removed.
15. **(original)** The method of claim 14 wherein at least 95% of the oil-based component is removed.
16. **(original)** The method of claim 1 wherein the portion of oil-based component that is removed is reused in step a.
17. **(previously presented)** In the process of making honeycomb articles by forming and shaping into a green body, a plasticized powder mixture comprising powder material, a

water soluble binder, an aqueous solvent, and a non-solvent oil-based component, the improvement which comprises removing the oil-based component prior to firing of the green body by flowing a gas at a temperature and rate sufficient to remove a portion of the non-solvent oil-based component.

18-27. **(canceled)**

28. **(previously presented)** The method of claim 1 wherein the aqueous solvent is water.

29. **(previously presented)** The method of claim 1 wherein the binder is a cellulose ether binder.

30. **(previously presented)** The method of claim 1 wherein the binder comprises methylcellulose or a methylcellulose derivative.

31. **(currently amended)** A method for forming a multicellular ceramic article, the method comprising:

[a.] forming a mixture of components comprising inorganic ceramic powder materials, a binder, an aqueous solvent for the binder, and an oil-based component having a flash point;

[b.] mixing and plasticizing the components to form a plasticized mixture;

[c.] shaping the plasticized mixture into a green ceramic article; then

[d.] removing at least 70% of the oil-based component from the green ceramic article by flowing a heated gas longitudinally through the green ceramic article for less than or equal to about 1 hour; and, then

[e.] firing the green ceramic article.

32. **(previously presented)** The method of claim 31 wherein at least 85% of the oil-based component is removed prior to the firing.

33. **(previously presented)** The method of claim 31 wherein at least 95% of the oil-based component is removed prior to the firing.

34. **(new)** The method of claim 31 wherein the heated gas is flowed longitudinally through the green ceramic article for less than 15 minutes.

35. **(new)** A method for forming a multicellular ceramic article, the method comprising:
forming a mixture of components comprising inorganic ceramic powder materials, a binder, an aqueous solvent for the binder, and an oil-based component having a flash point;

mixing and plasticizing the components to form a plasticized mixture;
shaping the plasticized mixture into a green honeycomb article; then
heating the green honeycomb article; then
cooling the green honeycomb article to about 100 °C; and, then
firing the green ceramic article into the multicellular ceramic article.

36. **(new)** The method of claim 35 wherein the green honeycomb article is heated by flowing a heated gas longitudinally through the green honeycomb article.

37. **(new)** A method for forming a multicellular ceramic article, the method comprising:
forming a mixture of components comprising inorganic ceramic powder materials, a binder, an aqueous solvent for the binder, and an oil-based component having a flash point;

mixing and plasticizing the components to form a plasticized mixture;
shaping the plasticized mixture into a green honeycomb article comprising longitudinal cells; then
positioning the green honeycomb article on a support device such that the longitudinal cells are arranged vertically; then
forcing a heated gas vertically through the longitudinal cells of the green ceramic article; then
firing the green ceramic article into the multicellular ceramic article.